

STATE OF COLORADO
Department of State

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Election Watch List

March 12, 2007

County

Pueblo

Background

The Secretary of State sent an Election Day Observer to Pueblo County for the 2006 General Election pursuant to § 1-1.5-104(2)(a)(II), C.R.S. While observing the election staff, the observer noted that they failed to perform absentee ballot signature verification, as pursuant to § 1-8-114.5, C.R.S.

In response to this alleged violation of election law, the Secretary of State conducted an audit of the absentee ballot signatures using a random sample audit of 5%. In conducting the audit, the Secretary of State staff noticed inefficiencies in the filing of the absentee ballot applications and the voter registration files. The Secretary of State did not find any fraudulent activity associated with the 2006 General Election in Pueblo County.

Deficiencies

The Pueblo County Clerk and Recorder election staff failed to verify signatures prior to the counting of absentee ballots as directed in § 1-8-114.5, C.R.S. Additionally, the staff did not utilize the ten days prior to Election Day to process the absentee ballots as allowed by § 1-8-303, C.R.S.

The methods used by the county to file voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications resulted in difficulties in locating the necessary forms and applications. The absentee ballot applications were filed by first letter only and voter registration forms filed by year and day of year (i.e. 61 for March 12).

Remediation

The Secretary of State requires that Pueblo County examine the processes by which the voter registration records are maintained and create a more efficient method of filing those records. Until the implementation of the statewide voter registration system, the county must implement

an alternative means of storing voter signatures electronically for utilization during the interim period.

The Secretary of State will conduct an on-site visit on a mutually agreed upon date prior to the 2008 Primary Election and General Election to ensure that absentee ballot applications are filed appropriately, and that the absentee ballots are being processed in accordance with Colorado law.

Lastly, the county is required to participate in the Secretary of State's certification program, which is currently being strengthened to ensure that the clerk and staff have a working knowledge of all aspects of election management.